

Preparing for the Journey: Guide

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Preparing for the Journey / Mentor / 2 Timothy 2:2

Core 52, ch 49

12/05/21

Dominant Thought: Christ's followers live out their mission when they disciple others who will disciples others.

Objectives:

I want my listeners to feel the need for mentors.

I want my listeners to realize they are able to serve as a mentor.

I want my listeners to identify their Timothy, Silas, and Barnabas.

In this journey of life, it is helpful to have a guide. A guide has been this way before. Whether it was Old Toby for Lewis and Clark or your parents who taught you how to tie your shoes, a guide goes ahead of you on the journey and is able to lead you somewhere you have not been.

Another way to describe a guide is to call them a mentor. We get the word mentor from an old classic by Homer called, *The Odyssey*.

When King Odysseus left for the Trojan War, he left his son, Telemachus, in the care of his friend, Mentor. In Homer's *Odyssey*, we read: "As he thus prayed, Minerva [Athena] came close up to him in the likeness and with the voice of Mentor. "Telemachus," said she, "if you are made of the same stuff as your father you will be neither fool nor coward henceforward, for Ulysses never broke his word nor left his work half done" (Book 2).

The words from Athena, who took the form of Mentor, were used to encourage and challenge Telemachus for the journey in front of him.

The apostle Paul shares some similar words to his young apprentice named Timothy in 2 Timothy 2.1-2

2 Timothy 2:1–2 NIV

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Paul has reached out to Timothy to challenge him and give him encouragement. Paul and Timothy had quite a relationship. Paul met Timothy in Acts 16. Paul calls Timothy his helper and fellow co-worker. Paul entrusted Timothy with leadership responsibility as Timothy ministered in the city of Ephesus. Paul wrote Timothy two letters that are included in our New Testament, 1 and 2 Timothy. We read in 2 Timothy 2.1 that Paul calls him “son” or “child”, and he’ll call him “son” four times in those letters (1 Tim. 1.2, 18; 2 Tim. 1.2; 2.1).

Paul loves this young man. Paul shows us the example of older men mentoring younger men. In his letter to another younger minister, Titus, he instructs older men to teach younger men and older women to teach younger women.

Here’s one example of what this looks like. Here’s a picture from last Tuesday at Ozark Christian College in Joplin, MO. Michael and I took five students for a Tuesday Tour. By the way, all the kids said they would recommend the Tuesday Tour to other juniors and seniors. The picture is me with Ted and Bev Skiles and my daughters, Jade, our exchange student, and Grace. How many generations are represented in this picture? Answer three. Ted and Bev have influenced me and more so my wife. Ted and Bev spent their entire adult life serving at The Home of God’s Love in Lo-Tung, Taiwan. I’m going to estimate close to 50 years of their life. My wife spent 10 months in college with them in Taiwan after she had spent 10 weeks with them as a teenager one summer. Ted and Bev have shown us how to love on babies and care for those in need. They have served Jesus with humility, grace, and grit. They have helped us and through their example we are raising up another generation of kingdom leaders through our family. In this picture, Grace and Jade are here. What else I love about this picture is that there are three nations represented: America, France, and Taiwan. This is one picture of what mentoring looks like.

So, my question is, “Who’s your Timothy?” Who is a little bit earlier on their journey with Jesus that you can come alongside and mentor or encourage.

Last Spring our leaders spent a Saturday to pray and plan for the future. Don Green from Lincoln Christian University spent the morning with us and shared the growth stages of an intentional discipling church. One of the categories of a discipling church is “Mentoring Mindset.” Here are the six growth stages: 1) Mentoring is poorly understood. 2) Some leaders are mentoring others. 3) The Body is beginning to understand the concept of one person spiritually helping another. 4) Mentoring is becoming an integral part of the church’s ministries. 5) Second generation laborers are involved in mentoring. 6) Third and fourth generation laborers are involved in mentoring.

As you can see, we have some work to do, and it takes time. The exciting part is that each of us could jump to at least level three by the end of this sermon if you start to understand the idea that as followers of Jesus, we are called to help one another spiritually.

Paul invested in Timothy, but he also had a Silas. Not only should we be investing in those earlier in their journeys with Jesus, we also need some peers who may be on the same path as we are. Paul had lots of friends to help him along the way, but one that stands out for me is Silas. Silas is called a “leading man among the brothers” in Acts 15.22. Silas was a preacher or a prophet (Acts 15.32). He accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey and spent most of a night with Paul in jail in Acts 16. Paul and Silas were beat up for preaching and casting out an evil spirit. At midnight, they are praying and singing songs in that Philippian jail.

Paul understood the value of friendships. Read his letters and he has lists and lists of people to greet and give thanks. Silas seems to show up in a special place from time to time and yet in some ways seems to be in the background, too.

I could show pictures of several people here and many from this church family, but I’ll share a picture of my friend, Fred Hansen. Fred and I became friends when I was in school at Lincoln. He preached at Blooming Grove Christian Church near Palmyra. Now, he serves with TCM, a teaching ministry that reaches students in Eastern Europe and Africa. It is quite exciting stuff. Fred has been a dear brother. I call him my exegetical cop. If I’m studying scripture and come up to a thorny interpretive issue,

he's one of my first calls. We've enjoyed visits over the phone and in person over the years. He showed me how to shoot clay pigeons. I'm thankful for dear friends to walk the journey of Jesus.

Who's your Silas?

Paul had Timothy, someone who was early in the journey to mentor and guide. Paul had Silas, someone on a similar stage of the journey to walk together and encourage and support one another.

Paul also had Barnabas. If it were not for Barnabas, I'm not sure we would even know about Paul or have half of our New Testament. Paul, also known as Saul at that time was on a road from Jerusalem to Damascus when he was blinded by a light from heaven and Jesus got Saul/Paul's attention. Saul/Paul accepts Christ, is baptized, and attempts to join the apostles. However, Saul was known as a killer of Christians. Listen to Luke's account of how the story goes.

Acts 9:26–28 NIV

When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.

So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

If it were not for Barnabas, Saul/Paul may not have been received by the apostles. Barnabas shows up 28 times in our New Testament. He accompanied Paul on the first mission trip. The first few times you read about Paul and Barnabas, Barnabas is the one listed first. Barnabas, the son of encouragement, was able to encourage Paul and lead him. Barnabas was a little further in the journey with Jesus than Paul was at the time.

I've had a lot of Barnabas people in my life. I'm thankful for people like my grandpa Wes who showed me how to drive a tractor when I was about 8 or 9 years old. He showed me how to use an acetylene torch, lay block, and put sheet metal on a roof. He mentored me for a season. I'm thankful for some coaches who were Christians like Bob Coffey and Alvin Elbert. It

was cool seeing those guys as the same men in the Sunday school room as they were in the locker room. I've had some wonderful teachers and preachers who have helped me along the way.

If you know me well enough, then you know where this may be heading. I'm grateful for my brother, Wayne Shaw, who mentored me for 20 plus years. He coached me through my courtship with Beth. He prayed with me and studied with me. We had a lot of good meals at Bonanza in Lincoln until it closed. He coached me in my preaching, and we just shared life together.

Wayne had a knack for asking me the questions that I didn't want to answer. It was a wonderful experience. Over the last couple of years, he was telling me that I was helping him as much he was helping me.

Wayne has gone to be with Jesus, but I still hear his voice in the stories he shared and the memories we made. I've reached out to another brother just last week and he has accepted my invitation to serve as my mentor. I'm excited to see what the future holds on that front.

So, who's your Barnabas? Who's your mentor; someone who is further on their journey with Jesus to help you?

A few weeks ago, we asked you to fill out some cards to share with us your interests and passions. There were lots of choices, so this is in no way a scientific survey. In the couple dozen cards we received, three people circled they had a passion for mentoring others. As I said, there were many choices, but I do want to highlight from Scripture that we are called to make disciples or mentor others.

My friends, I believe in each one of you. I hope and pray that if you do not have a Timothy, a Silas, and a Barnabas, that you will find those relationships this week.

The words of Paul to Timothy from 2 Timothy 2.2 are:

2 Timothy 2:2 NIV

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

They sound a lot like the words of Jesus to his disciples:

Matthew 28:19–20 ESV

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

My prayer is that **Christ’s followers live out their mission when they disciple others who will disciples others.**